

Message Text

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ORIGIN ACDA-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 269394

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, US, UN

SUBJECT: 32ND UNGA DISARMAMENT DEBATE: CONVENTIONAL ARMS
TRANSFER ISSUE

REFS: (A) STATE 25144; (B) USUN 3914; (C) USUN 4419

1. AT THE CURRENT UNGA WE WISH TO STIMULATE INTEREST IN AND
PROMOTE A POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD THE QUESTION OF CONVEN-
TIONAL ARMS TRANSFERS (CAT) WITH A VIEW TO SETTING THE STAGE
FOR SERIOUS CONSIDERATION OF THE ISSUE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE
UNGA SPECIAL SESSION ON DISARMAMENT (SSOD). WHILE THE US IS
NOT SEEKING TO GENERATE ANY SPECIFIC CAT RESOLUTIONS AT THE
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CURRENT UNGA, WE WOULD WELCOME ANY MODERATE CAT RESOLUTIONS
THAT WERE BALANCED, CONSTRUCTIVE, AND ENJOYED BROAD SUPPORT.
HOWEVER, WE PARTICULARLY WISH TO AVOID PRESSING ANY CONTEN-
TIOUS CAT ISSUES PREMATURELY WHICH MIGHT PREJUDICE SSOD CON-
SIDERATION OF THE ISSUE.

2. AS WE PROCEED TO LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR CONSTRUCTIVE CON-

SIDERATION OF CAT ISSUE AT THE SSOD, INCLUDING THE JANUARY PREPCOM, WE EXPECT TO BE CONSULTING WITH SELECTED GOVERNMENTS. TO ASSIST IN THIS EFFORT, DEL SHOULD SEEK TO IDENTIFY KEY INDIVIDUALS AND COUNTRIES THAT HAVE POTENTIAL FOR PLAYING A HELPFUL ROLE. DEL SHOULD REPORT VIEWS EXPRESSED ON

THE CAT ISSUE AT THE CURRENT SESSION, BOTH PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY, AND SHOULD BE PARTICULARLY ALERT TO REGIONAL ATTITUDES AND POTENTIAL SUPPORT AMONG THE NONALIGNED. HOWEVER, DEL SHOULD AVOID ACTIVITIES AND PROBING WHICH MIGHT STIR SPECULATIONS REGARDING US INTENTIONS BEFORE US APPROACH TO ISSUE FULLY DEVELOPED.

3. DEL SHOULD CONSULT WITH THE ITALIANS IN REGARD TO THEIR IDEA FOR ESTABLISHING REGIONAL COMMISSIONS ON CONVENTIONAL ARMS, PURSUANT TO ARTICLE 29 OF THE UN CHARTER, AND SHOULD INQUIRE WHETHER ITALY INTENDS TO SUBMIT A DRAFT RES ON ITS PROPOSAL AT THE CURRENT UNGA. REGIONAL COMMISSIONS UNDER ARTICLE 29 WOULD REPORT TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL, AND DEL SHOULD INDICATE TO ITALIANS THAT WE AND OTHERS WOULD NEED TIME TO STUDY THE POLITICAL AND INSTITUTIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT, WHICH INVOLVE THE FUNDAMENTAL STRUCTURE OF THE UN.

4. THE QUESTION OF CONVENTIONAL ARMS TRANSFERS IS AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF THE TENTATIVE BELGIAN PROPOSAL (REFTEL B)
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FOR AN EXPERTS STUDY ON ALL TYPES OF REGIONAL DISARMAMENT MEASURES. DEL SHOULD REPORT ANY DEVELOPMENTS WITH REGARD TO TEXTUAL CHANGES AND POTENTIAL SUPPORT FOR THE BELGIAN PROPOSAL, PARTICULARLY AMONG NON-WESTERN DELS.

5. DEL SHOULD MAINTAIN CLOSE CONTACT WITH THE JAPANESE REGARDING THEIR CAT PROPOSAL. WHILE WE COULD SUPPORT A MOD-EST APPROACH ALONG THE LINES OF JAPANESE DRAFT RES (REF C), WE WOULD NOT LIKE TO SEE IT INTRODUCED UNLESS THERE IS SOLID BACKING FOR IT. IN PARTICULAR, WE WISH TO AVOID ANY ACTION IN FIRST COMMITTEE WHICH MIGHT BE INTERPRETED AS A REJECTION OF CAT ISSUE OR MIGHT PREJUDICE SSOD CONSIDERATION. IF THE JAPANESE DECIDE TO PROCEED WITH RES, DEL SHOULD ANALYZE LIKELY VOTING RESULTS, IN PARTICULAR WITH RESPECT TO THE IMPORTANT NONALIGNED COUNTRIES, AND REPORT THE RESULTS.

6. DEL SHOULD INFORMALLY SEEK VIEWS AMONG BARTON GROUP DELS ON SSOD STRATEGY FOR CAT ISSUE ALONG FOLLOWING LINES.

--CONVENTIONAL ARMS TRANSFER ISSUE SHOULD BE CLEARLY MENTIONED IN SSOD DOCUMENTS UNDER RUBRIC OF BROADER ISSUE OF

CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL. WHILE CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL NOT POPULAR ISSUE AMONG NON-ALIGNED, IT IS PROBABLY VIEWED AS LESS DISCRIMINATORY THAN CAT. EMBEDDING CAT IN CONVENTIONAL ARMS CONTROL CONTEXT MIGHT MAKE CAT HARDER TO SINGLE OUT FOR ATTACK.

-- REGIONAL INITIATIVES SHOULD BE EMPHASIZED TO REDUCE FEARS OF RESTRAINT BEING IMPOSED BY A SUPPLIER CARTEL.

--REGIONAL INITIATIVES SHOULD NOT DETRACT FROM BASIC CONCEPT OF EQUAL OBLIGATIONS FOR SUPPLIERS AND RECIPIENTS. (WE ARE PRESENTLY EXAMINING QUESTION OF WHAT OBLIGATIONS SUPPLIERS MIGHT UNDERTAKE.)

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--NEED TO MEET LEGITIMATE SECURITY REQUIREMENTS OF RECIPIENTS SHOULD BE EMPHASIZED.

BASIC APPROACH ABOVE IS CONSISTENT WITH THE CONVENTIONAL ARMS PORTION OF THE DRAFT CANADIAN PROGRAM OF ACTION, ALTHOUGH WE ARE NOT WEDDED TO LATTER.

7. WHEN APPROPRIATE, DEL MAY UNDERScore US INTEREST IN CAT ISSUE, CITING PRESIDENT CARTER'S STATEMENT TO THE UNGA ON OCTOBER 4, 1977. DEL SHOULD DRAW ON RELEVANT PORTIONS OF US FIRST COMMITTEE STATEMENT OF OCTOBER 18, WHICH SETS TONE OF US APPROACH TO CAT ISSUE IN UN DISARMAMENT CONTEXT.

8. DURING CONVERSATIONS ON THE CAT ISSUE WITH BARTON GROUP OR WITH NON-ALIGNED WHO SEEK OUR VIEWS, DEL MAY MAKE FOLLOWING GENERAL POINTS WHICH FOLLOW BASIC LINES OF FIRST COMMITTEE STATEMENT.

A. THE SSOD SHOULD NOT IGNORE CONVENTIONAL ARMS TRANSFERS, WHICH ARE AN IMPORTANT ARMS CONTROL ISSUE.

B. WE BELIEVE THE PROBLEM OF CONVENTIONAL ARMS TRANSFERS SHOULD BE CLEARLY RECOGNIZED, ALTHOUGH WE THINK THAT A BALANCED APPROACH WOULD TREAT IT AS ONLY ONE ASPECT OF CONVENTIONAL DISARMAMENT.

C. WE HAVE TAKEN A SPECIAL INTEREST IN THE ISSUE, BECAUSE WE RECOGNIZE OUR RESPONSIBILITY AS A MAJOR SUPPLIER.

D. NEVERTHELESS, WE DO NOT THINK THE PROBLEM CAN BE SOLVED BY ANY SINGLE STATE OR GROUP OF STATES IMPOSING ITS VIEWS.

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E. EVERY NATION HAS A STAKE IN REVERSING THE INCENTIVES FOR INCREASED SPENDING FOR CONVENTIONAL ARMS. THE SOLUTIONS WILL NOT BE EASY, SINCE THE SUBJECT IS VERY COMPLEX.

F. FREQUENTLY, SECURITY INTERESTS MAY BE BETTER SERVED BY RESTRAINT IN THE PURCHASE OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT THAN BY MORE SPENDING ON DEFENSE. NEW WEAPONS SYSTEMS CAN RAISE TENSIONS, LAUNCH NEW ROUNDS OF COMPETITION, AND INCREASE THE

RISK OF HOSTILITIES.

G. ADVANCED NEW MILITARY EQUIPMENT MAY NOT PROVIDE AN EFFICIENT OR EFFECTIVE DEFENSE FOR MANY COUNTRIES. SUCH SYSTEMS MAY PROVE IMPOSSIBLE TO MAINTAIN OR EVEN IMPRACTICAL TO USE WHEN HOSTILITIES OCCUR.

H. WE BELIEVE THAT THE PROCESS OF SEEKING A SOLUTION MUST BE GUIDED BY TWO PRINCIPLES:

-- ALL STATES HAVE LEGITIMATE SECURITY REQUIREMENTS AND THESE MUST BE MET.

-- BOTH PRODUCER AND CONSUMER NATIONS ARE CONCERNED, AND A SUCCESSFUL SOLUTION MUST REFLECT INTERESTS AND THE IDEAS OF BOTH. VANCE

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